

# "That You May Believe"

## Gospel of John

### Week 7

**Main Idea – Isaiah promised the Messiah would come. Jesus came as the promised Messiah.**

The goal of this week's lesson is to help the children understand more about John the Baptist — that He was not the Messiah, but came to announce the coming of the Messiah. Through the prophet Isaiah, God made a promise that a messenger would come to announce the arrival of the Messiah. This week's lesson culminates in the Lord Jesus who is the Messiah who came as God promised! When the disciples were confused about the identity of Jesus, John once again affirms that Jesus is the Messiah and that he is not.

*Sunday school* teachers should emphasize the first half of the main idea in an interactive way for **20 minutes**, and explain the second half clearly without much interaction as a conclusion for **5 minutes**. *Children's church* teachers should explain the first half without much interaction for **5 minutes** as an introduction and emphasize the second half in an interactive way for **20 minutes**.

## Sunday School — Isaiah 40:1-5

### Preparation

Materials:

- What's In The Future? — Game print outs
- Two levels of word searches to emphasize main point.
- Isaiah coloring page

Set-up:

- Print out the answers for "What's In The Future?" and use magnets to have them on the whiteboard face down so that they cannot be read by the children.

### Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

John 3:16 (ESV) – "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing “For God So Loved The World” (SFW, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Start the Bible Verse section at the beginning without waiting for students who may arrive late. This will preserve the allotted times for other sections.

## Lesson (20-25 minutes)<sup>1</sup>

Main Idea – **Isaiah** promised the Messiah would **come**.

Pray

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Today, we are going to open with a game called, “What’s in the future?” Here’s how the game works. You will come up with a question about the future — it can be about your life, about the world, etc. Then, you will come up to the board for the answer to your question. **Example** — “**Will it rain next week?**”

Once you have a student with a question, you can have them come up to the board and pick an answer. On the board will be a variety of ambitious answers that don’t give them a definite answer.

After the game, ask the children these types of questions:

- **Were those good answers to your questions?** No! All the answers are general and vague, they don’t give any definite answers.
- **Why is the future so difficult to know for certain?** Because we don’t know everything.
- **Is it possible to know the future?** Yes!
- **Who knows the future?** God.

In order to perfectly keep a promise, you must know the future and if you are able to keep it. Because God knows the future, He is the only one who is able to keep His promises.

Today, we are going to learn about a promise that God made through the prophet Isaiah.

### Body (15 minutes)

Main Point — Isaiah promised the Messiah would come. The only way Isaiah can make this promise is if God tells him it will happen. Let’s look at Isaiah 40 to learn more about this promise.

1. The sadness — At this time in Israel’s history, they are a sad nation. Why would Israel, God’s chosen people, be sad? They were suffering from the consequences of their sin. Israel had sinned against God, and God had punished them. But there is good news of Israel’s sadness:

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<sup>1</sup> If you believe that you have the time to use Isaiah 40:6-11 to strengthen your lesson points, that is totally fine!

Read Isaiah 40:1-2 — God gives Isaiah a new message to give to the people. What is that message about? Comfort! God tells Isaiah that His people will be comforted. This isn't just a wish or a dream, it's a promise — you will be comforted!

How does a person experience comfort in their sadness and sin? There's only one way — they must be forgiven. Here, God promises that He will one day forgive their sins completely! They had already suffered enough because of their sins, and now God was going to show them His incredible grace.

But Israel was still sad when Isaiah wrote this, it wasn't time for God to fulfill this promise yet. So a question they might have is, "When will this happen, Lord?" While the Lord doesn't give them the exact year or month this will happen, He does give them something to look for, a type of sign.

## 2. The shout — Read Isaiah 40:3-4

When the time comes for the Lord to begin to fulfill this promise, the Lord will send someone to shout a message — a voice of someone crying in the wilderness. What is the message that they will say to Israel? Clear the way through the wilderness for the LORD! The Messiah is coming, and I am here to tell you to prepare the way for this coming King.

Why must the way for the Lord be prepared? What makes it so important?

## 3. The Savior — Read Isaiah 40:5

It is important because the people will see the glory of the Lord! Their eyes will behold the Messiah, the One who will forgive their sins, remove their sadness, and bring with Him the Kingdom of God!

Now, if you were a Jew, there would be few promises in God's Word that you looked forward to more than this. And so they waited for this day to come, wondering when their Messiah would finally arrive.

### **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

Today, we know that the person God sent to shout, "The Messiah is coming!" was John the Baptist. He was considered the greatest man born from a woman because of his unique role in the history of the world — the man who was privileged to announce the arrival of God's promised Messiah.

Now, there were men that loved John's ministry — they loved his preaching, his faithfulness to God — and they wanted to stay loyal to him. But that was never John's role, to gain followers for himself. He was pointing people towards the coming Lord, the greater One, the Messiah. And that Messiah is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore — every time you hear a teacher or preacher tell you about the Bible, even if they are really interesting or really encouraging, don't forget what you are called to do — look to Jesus. Prepare the way for the Lord by believing in Him and living your life in a way that shows the world a King is coming.

Pray

## **Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)**

# Children's Church — John 3:22-36

## Preparation

Materials:

- “This or that?” — Picture comparisons
- Two levels of word searches to emphasize main point.
- John 3 coloring page

Set-up:

- Print out the picture comparisons (or use powerpoint) for the opening game.

## Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

John 3:16 (ESV) – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing “For God So Loved The World” (SFW, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Start the Bible Verse section at the beginning without waiting for students who may arrive late. This will preserve the allotted times for other sections.

## Lesson (20-25 minutes)

Main Idea – Jesus came as the promised Messiah.

Pray

### Introduction (5 minutes)

This morning in Sunday school, we talked about how only God is able to keep His promises. He can keep His promises because He knows the future! We looked at how God promised, through the prophet Isaiah, to send a Messiah into the world! This Messiah would be His chosen King, the One who would reign forever on God's behalf. And when that Messiah comes, it is the world's responsibility to listen to Him!

Before we talk more about this coming Messiah, we are going to begin with a game — This or That! I will show you two photos at a time, and you will tell me which one you like more, and why.

Hamburger (In-n-out)

Chicken Sandwich (Chickfila)

Dog

Cat

Beach

Snow

Chocolate

Gummy bears

This is how life works — when we have two choices, we often like one more than we like another. This isn't just true with food, or places, but also with people! When we like a person, such as our best friend, we want to spend more time with them than with someone else. But what happens when it would please God for us to spend more time focusing on someone else instead of someone we really like?

Today we are going to look at a time when a group of disciples had to learn to follow someone different than the person they began their discipleship with.

### **Body (15 minutes)**

Main Point — Jesus came as the promised Messiah. John the baptist identified Him to the world in the first chapter of John's gospel. This was great news for the Jewish people! Their Messiah was finally here! But at first, not everyone was excited. In fact, most people were confused. One group in particular was confused — the disciples of John the Baptist.

1. The Misunderstanding — What does it mean to misunderstand? It means that you are confused about something that was said or something that happened.

Read John 3:22-26

Why were the disciples confused? Everyone was going to Jesus and His disciples to be baptized. This means that less people were coming to John the Baptist to be baptized. John's disciples were confused — "John is the one who baptizes. Why is everyone going to Jesus?"

It's like if you loved coming to Children's Church (which you all do!) and the class kept getting smaller because more and more children chose to go to another class with a different teacher. You might ask me, "Why are they going to another class and not this one?" They did not understand.

Thankfully, John understood exactly what was happening.

2. The Messiah — Read John 3:27-28

Why was John not upset that everyone was going to Jesus? Because Jesus was the Messiah! And God sent the Messiah so that everyone would go to Him.

If everyone was supposed to go to Jesus, then what was John's role? John was the one who prepared the way for Jesus. John knew that once the Messiah came, that even his disciples should follow Jesus, because that was God's desire!

John uses an illustration of a wedding to help them understand why they should now follow Jesus instead of John.

Read John 3:29-30

Who is Jesus in the wedding illustration? The bridegroom — He is the focus of the wedding, the one who is to receive the bride.

Who is John in the wedding illustration? The friend of the bridegroom — He is not the focus of the wedding, but a dear friend who was invited and rejoices to see the bridegroom receive all the attention.

He closes by saying that Jesus' ministry must increase, and that his ministry must decrease. John had carried out his ministry — announcing the arrival of the Messiah. And as verse 24 says, it was just a matter of time before he was thrown in prison.

Which brings us to the final point.

3. The Mandate — What is a mandate? It's a command. Something that must be done. John 3 closes with a command that God wants every person to understand.

Read John 3:36

What does the person who believes in God's Son receive? Eternal life! If they hear the words of Jesus and they obey Him by faith, they will receive eternal life.

What does the person who rejects God's Son receive? In this life, they don't have eternal life (true spiritual life) AND they remain under God's wrath. If they die without believing in the Son, they will experience God's eternal judgment for their sin in hell.

### **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

John the baptist was a great man. As we saw in Sunday school, the Scriptures even said that God would raise up John to announce the coming of the Messiah! But even though he was great, John remains just a man.

Instead of focusing on John, we are to turn our eyes to the Messiah — the one that John was called to announce and the One that God promised would come — the Lord Jesus Christ.

God faithfully kept His promise to send the Messiah. God will also keep His promise about how we receive His Son. Believe in God's Son so that you will have eternal life! There is no greater privilege than this! But reject God's Son, and you will be eternally cut off from life, and suffer the wrath of God for your sin forever.

Let's review the main point again — Jesus came as the promised Messiah (x3). How are we called to respond?

Believe in Him! And you will be saved.

Pray

## **Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)**